

THE MARSHALL CENTER

transnational weekly



A CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICE FROM THE MARSHALL CENTER

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COUNTERING TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME (CTOC)

CORRUPTION

Austria's Kurz under investigation by anti-corruption prosecutors

Laurenz Gehrke – Politico: 12 May 2021

Anti-corruption prosecutors are investigating Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz over possible false testimony to a parliamentary commission investigating the fallout from the so-called Ibiza sting video that felled a previous government.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/austria-chancellor-sebastian-kurz-investigation-ibiza-scandal/>

Form Over Substance? UK Anti-Corruption Sanctions Are No Substitute for Action

Tom Keatinge – Royal United Services Institute: 12 May 2021

To be a force for good, the United Kingdom's anti-corruption sanctions must be paired with seizing and returning stolen assets to benefit deprived citizens.

<https://rusi.org/commentary/form-over-substance-uk-anti-corruption-sanctions-are-no-substitute-action>

For more on this theme:

Whistleblowers are being scared into silence, hampering efforts to expose corruption in Australia, research finds

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/apr/30/australias-whistleblowers-are-being-scared-into-silence-by-significant-gaps-in-protections-research-finds>

US targets Central America officials for possible sanctions over corruption: envoy

<https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202105/1222795.shtml>

Karpowership denies corruption allegations and threatens to withdraw integral energy supply to Lebanon

<https://www.news24.com/fin24/Economy/karpowership-denies-corruption-allegations-and-threatens-to-withdraw-integral-energy-supply-to-lebanon-20210509>

Qatar finance minister arrested in corruption investigation

<https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-qatar-arrests-business-eb4712950836b4e45698e6e0821f5ae6>

Qatar's amir abolishes immunity for ministers amid fight against corruption

<https://www.dohanews.co/qatars-amir-abolishes-immunity-for-ministers-amid-fight-against-corruption/>

Corruption, economic woes spark deadly protests in Colombia

<https://apnews.com/article/colombia-shootings-coronavirus-pandemic-business-tax-reform-6ed35865fbe5487fe8cc36ddffba6a3c>

Corruption, an Unnecessary Evil

<https://www.fairobserver.com/business/henry-mccaw-corruption-self-regulation-anti-bribery-mechanism-technology-news-12188/>

Police In Russia's Tatarstan Jail, Fine Journalists Reporting On Corruption

<https://www.rferl.org/a/tatarstan-jail-journalists-reporting-corruption/31250813.html>

DRUG TRAFFICKING

'A dirty business': how one drug is turning Syria into a narco-state

Martin Chulov – The Guardian: 7 May 2021

The manufacture of the drug Captagon is a growth industry so big it is starting to rival Syria's gross domestic product.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/may/07/drug-captagon-turning-syria-into-narco-state>

Mexico's cartels are experimenting with control of another part of the cocaine trade

Luis Chaparro – Business Insider: 7 May 2021

Mexican drug cartels' long-standing attempts to bring coca plantations out of South America and onto their turf may be bearing fruit.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/mexican-cartels-are-experimenting-with-cocaine-production-in-mexico-2021-5>

For more on this theme:

Review of the 64th Commission on Narcotic Drugs

<https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/64-cnd-review/>

Has Honduras become a 'narco-state'?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-56947595>

The rise of Brazil's neo-Pentecostal narco-militia

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/democraciaabierta/rise-narco-militia-pentecostal-brazil-en/>

China issues total ban on synthetic cannabinoids

<https://apnews.com/article/china-health-f093206666969b3cd748a47964de7ae0>

Understanding the nature and threats of drug trafficking to national and regional security in West Africa

<https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/editorial/understanding-the-nature-and-threats-of-drug-traffic-ing-to-national-and-regional-security-in-west-africa>

5 Animals Used to Smuggle Drugs in Latin America

<https://insightcrime.org/news/animals-used-smuggle-drugs-latin-america/>

How has the drugs trade reached every corner of Ireland, and who is involved?

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/how-has-the-drugs-trade-reached-every-corner-of-ireland-and-who-is-involved-1.4558401>

Afghanistan is being overrun by crystal meth as US begins withdrawal

<https://www.businessinsider.com/afghanistan-is-being-overrun-by-crystal-meth-2021-5>

Inside Harare's drug syndicates

<https://www.sundaymail.co.zw/inside-harares-drug-syndicates>

Opioid crisis: New evidence shows how 'medication-assisted treatment' saves lives and money

<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/opioid-crisis-new-evidence-shows-how-medication-assisted-treatment-saves-money-and-lives-191603723.html>

TRAFFICKING IN SCARCE OR PROTECTED RESOURCES

From tigers to chimpanzees, how cute social media videos could be driving the exotic pet trade

Len Gordon and James Purtill – ABC: 9 May 2021

“People don’t realize that dealing with these animals in the way they are being handled in these videos is not only an issue for biosecurity ... but also a conservation issue and a welfare issue,” said Anne-Lise Chaber of the University of Adelaide, co-author of a recent study.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2021-05-08/cute-social-media-videos-normalising-exotic-pet-trade/100101262>

VIDEO: Deadly shootout in Brazil’s Amazon as illegal miners enter indigenous lands

Cecilia Jamasmie – Mining.com: 11 May 2021

Illegal gold miners inside a protected area in the Brazilian Amazon fired automatic weapons at an Indigenous community, local leaders say.

<https://www.mining.com/deadly-shootout-in-brazils-amazon-as-illegal-miners-enter-indigenous-land/>

For more on this theme:

3D Printed Shark Fins to Help Customs Officials Detect Real Ones

<https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/14344-3d-printed-shark-fins-to-help-customs-officials-detect-real-ones>

South African dehorning initiative aims for ‘zero poached’ white rhinos

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/04/south-african-dehorning-initiative-aims-for-zero-poached-white-rhinos/>

NGO’s Fear EU Weakening Illegal Logging Regulations

<https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/14328-ngo-s-fear-eu-weakening-illegal-logging-regulations>

Cambodia Sentences Five Environmental Activists to Jail For ‘Incitement’

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/cambodia/sentencing-05052021191457.html>

In Project Amazônia 2.0, communities and technology team up for nature

<https://news.mongabay.com/2021/04/in-project-amazonia-2-0-communities-and-technology-team-up-for-nature/>

Malawi President Eyes Mining as Key Money Maker

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/malawi-president-eyes-mining-key-money-maker>

The plight of South Africa’s ‘Zama Zama’ illegal miners

<https://www.africanews.com/2021/04/30/the-plight-of-south-africa-s-zama-zama-illegal-miners/>

Illegal Fishing Is a National Security Problem

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2021/04/illegal-fishing-national-security-china/173660/>

Fishing in Dangerous Waters: A New Flashpoint for Latin America and China

<https://www.brinknews.com/fishing-in-dangerous-waters-a-new-flashpoint-for-latin-america-and-china/>

Dirty Business – The Smuggling Pipeline Carrying Mercury Across the Amazon

<https://insightcrime.org/news/dirty-business-smuggling-pipeline-carrying-mercury-amazon/>

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION

Balkan Migrant-Smuggling Business ‘Worth €50m a Year’: Report

Milica Stojanovic – Balkan Insight: 10 May 2021

The money to be made by “fixers,” “gatekeepers” and “package dealers” smuggling migrants across borders in the Western Balkans are detailed in a new report from the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

<https://balkaninsight.com/2021/05/10/balkan-migrant-smuggling-business-worth-e50m-a-year-report/>

Full report:

Spot Prices: Analyzing flows of people, drugs and money in the Western Balkans

<https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Spot-Prices-Analyzing-flows-of-people-drugs-and-money-in-the-Western-Balkans-1.pdf>

For more on this theme:

Turning technology against human traffickers

<https://news.mit.edu/2021/turning-technology-against-human-traffickers-0506>

Want to save the children? How child sexual abuse and human trafficking really work

<https://theconversation.com/want-to-save-the-children-how-child-sexual-abuse-and-human-trafficking-really-work-153288>

Finland unveils dozens of measures to combat human trafficking

<https://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/19207-finland-unveils-dozens-of-measures-to-combat-human-trafficking.html>

Human trafficking and modern slavery in Asia

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bigideas/human-trafficking-and-modern-slavery/13337120>

‘Perfect storm’ for human traffickers tough to reverse, say groups

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/05/13/perfect-storm-for-human-traffickers-tough-to-reverse-say-groups/>

How the #UNODC is Fighting Human Trafficking during the pandemic

<https://www.newsfirst.lk/2021/05/10/how-the-unodc-is-fighting-human-trafficking-during-the-pandemic/>

Spotlight on Brazil: What Works to Address Modern Slavery

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/spotlight-brazil-what-works-address-modern-slavery>

Sudan faces persistent human smuggling, trafficking from Ethiopia

<https://news.yahoo.com/sudan-faces-persistent-human-smuggling-103029171.html>

How smugglers seduce Central American migrants with the ‘American Dream’

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-smugglers-seduce-central-american-migrants-with-the-american-dream>

ORGANIZED CRIME

Interpol's New App Combats Art Crime and Protects Cultural Heritage

Nora McGreevy – Smithsonian Magazine: 12 May 2021

Interpol introduced a new app that can help law enforcement and the public fight art and antiquities trafficking. The ID-Art app uses image recognition software that can identify whether an item is part of Interpol's extensive database of looted art and antiquities.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/interpol-launches-app-help-people-report-stolen-art-180977700>

For more on this theme:

Fighting the menace of criminal counterfeiting

<https://www.worldtrademarkreview.com/anti-counterfeiting/fighting-the-menace-of-criminal-counterfeiting>

Mozambique: Experts Say Illicit Trade Has Shifted Out of War Zone

<https://allafrica.com/stories/202105070745.html>

Women Taking Bigger Role in Central America Extortion Schemes

<https://insightcrime.org/news/women-taking-bigger-role-central-america-extortion-schemes/>

Gang Made Millions Selling Fake Saffron as High-Quality Product

<https://www.occrp.org/en/daily/14367-gang-made-millions-selling-fake-saffron-as-high-quality-product>

Village Gives Children Guns and Sends Them Marching, Hoping Government Will Recognize Organized Violence In Mexico

<https://dailycaller.com/2021/05/10/guerro-mexico-drug-cartel/>

PROGRAM ON CYBER SECURITY STUDIES (PCSS)

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Working towards a fairer internet governance

Joe Mathews – Bangkok Post: 10 May 2021

Today's methods for governing the internet do not constitute a coherent system, much less a democratic one.

<https://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/2112951/working-towards-a-fairer-internet-governance>

For more on this theme:

(China, Global) China wants to patent a decentralized blockchain DNS

<https://domainnamewire.com/2021/05/10/china-wants-to-patent-a-decentralized-blockchain-dns/>

INTERNET FREEDOM

Africa, the internet and youth organizing

Jehron Muhammad – The Final Call: 11 May 2021

Autocratic leaders in Africa are increasingly relying on internet shutdowns to mitigate young people's use of social media to mobilize against post-colonial political structures.

<https://new.finalcall.com/2021/05/11/africa-the-internet-and-youth-organizing/>

For more on this theme:

(Global) The Internet, An Emerging Battlefield For Human Rights?

<https://www.cio.co.ke/the-internet-an-emerging-battlefield-for-human-rights/>

(China) Two face trial as China enforces online control amid pandemic

<https://nypost.com/2021/05/10/two-face-trial-as-china-enforces-online-control-amid-pandemic/>

(U.K.) U.K. Adds Anti-'Censorship' Clause to Online Safety Bill

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-05-11/u-k-adds-anti-censorship-clause-to-online-safety-bill>

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Germany just banned WhatsApp's new privacy policy, and all of the EU might be next

Manuel Vonau – Android Police: 12 May 2021

Facebook isn't allowed to process personal data from WhatsApp for its own purposes in Germany.

<https://www.androidpolice.com/2021/05/12/germany-just-banned-whatsapps-new-privacy-policy-and-all-of-the-eu-might-be-next/>

For more on this theme:

(Global) The Secret World of Cybersecurity

<https://www.ozy.com/the-new-and-the-next/the-secret-world-of-cybersecurity/431841/>

(Global) Securing the Internet of Things in the Age of Quantum Computing

<https://www.darkreading.com/iot/securing-the-internet-of-things-in-the-age-of-quantum-computing/a/d-id/1340857>

(U.S.) Senate Bill Would Expand Federal Children's Privacy Protections

<https://www.natlawreview.com/article/senate-bill-would-expand-federal-children-s-privacy-protections>

CYBER STATECRAFT

Tech-tonic shift in Sino-Russian cooperation

Nivedita Kapoor – Observer Research Foundation: 12 May 2021

Technological cooperation has increasingly gained significance in the Russia-China relationship, with 2020-21 marked as the “Year of Scientific, Technical and Innovation Cooperation.”

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/tech-tonic-shift-in-sino-russian-cooperation/>

For more on this theme:

(Global) How the Dictator's Digital Dilemma Constrains Leaders' Choices

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/how-dictators-digital-dilemma-constrains-leaders-choices>

(Global) Biden needs to counter Russia and China to secure our digital future

<https://thehill.com/opinion/technology/552693-biden-needs-to-counter-russia-and-china-to-secure-our-digital-future>

(U.K., Global) Britain to harness new cyber powers in pursuit of hostile states and terrorists

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/europe/britain-to-harness-new-cyber-powers-in-pursuit-of-hostile-states-and-terrorists-1.1221731>

CYBER CAPACITY BUILDING

FACTBOX-Italy's superfast broadband roll-out: the issues

Reuters: 6 May 2021

Italy wants to speed up the rollout of all-fiber, ultrafast broadband coverage to boost productivity and close a gap with major European rivals.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/telecom-italia-single-network-plans-idUSL8N2MD53H>

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Rural Internet Access: How To Get Broadband Across America

<https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2021/04/30/rural-access-to-the-internet-how-to-get-broadband-across-america>

(U.S.) Civilian Cyber Reserve Program Proposed

<https://www.bankinfosecurity.com/civilian-cyber-reserve-program-proposed-a-16486>

CYBERCRIME

Cybercrime a booming business — thanks to COVID

Marcel Fürstenau – Deutsche Welle: 11 May 2021

The coronavirus pandemic has given a huge boost to internet crime. Offenses are increasing while the number of solved cases is stagnating in Germany.

<https://www.dw.com/en/cybercrime-a-booming-business-thanks-to-covid/a-57499072>

For more on this theme:

(U.K., Global) Ransomware: Don't pay up, it just shows cyber criminals that attacks work, warns home secretary

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/ransomware-dont-pay-the-ransom-it-just-encourage-cyber-criminals-that-attacks-work-warns-home-secretary/>

(U.K., Global) UK to fund national cyber teams in Global South

<https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252500636/UK-to-fund-national-cyber-teams-in-Global-South>

(Russia, U.K.) Russia must do more to tackle cyber criminals operating from within its borders, says UK

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/russia-must-do-more-to-tackle-cyber-criminals-operating-from-within-its-borders-says-uk/>

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Colonial cyberattack exposes years of infrastructure underinvestment

David Jones – Construction Dive: 12 May 2021

The risk to critical infrastructure is a long-festering concern in the cybersecurity industry. Researchers, corporate security officers and government experts feared that energy producers, utilities and water systems lacked the personnel and investment in security. The risk increased with the exposure of industrial control systems to the open internet.

<https://www.constructiondive.com/news/critical-infrastructure-attack-ransomware/599974/>

For more on this theme:

(U.S.) Biden signs executive order designed to strengthen federal digital defenses

https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/biden-executive-order-cybersecurity/2021/05/12/9269e932-acd5-11eb-acd3-24b44a57093a_story.html

(U.K.) Spy bosses warn of cyber-attacks on smart cities

<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-57012725>

(Global) Critical Infrastructure Under Attack

<https://www.darkreading.com/attacks-breaches/critical-infrastructure-under-attack-/a/d-id/1340960>

MASS SURVEILLANCE AND INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

China's 'social credit' system ranks citizens and punishes them with throttled internet speeds and flight bans if the Communist Party deems them untrustworthy

Alexandra Ma and Katie Canales – Business Insider: 9 May 2021

The Chinese Communist Party has been constructing a moral ranking system to monitor the behavior of its enormous population – and rank them all based on their “social credit.”

<https://www.businessinsider.com/china-social-credit-system-punishments-and-rewards-explained-2018-4>

PROGRAM ON TERRORISM AND SECURITY STUDIES (PTSS)

ISIS AND FOREIGN FIGHTERS

UN Team Says Islamic State Committed Genocide Against Yazidis

Voice of America: 10 May 2021

Experts say they have convincing evidence that ISIS committed genocide “against the Yazidi as a religious group.”

<https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/un-team-says-islamic-state-committed-genocide-against-yazidis>

French admiral: Air power helps root out ‘underground’ ISIS

Menelaos Hadjicostis – The Associated Press: 10 May 2021

A French military leader said that ISIS is “regenerating” with stealth by developing its military capabilities underground. France is sending warships and aircraft to Syria and Iraq to examine the threat the group poses.

<https://apnews.com/article/islamic-state-group-persian-gulf-tensions-europe-business-health-cf1d7b175d-4748044c04ffbaf1d311c>

For more on this theme:

Civilians flee surging ISIS in Diyala

<https://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/030520212>

The ISIS Files: The Islamic State’s Department of Soldiers

<https://isisfiles.gwu.edu/downloads/q237hr95t?locale=en>

Following Deadly Attack, Iraqi Kurds Call for Better Coordination in Countering IS

<https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/following-deadly-attack-iraqi-kurds-call-better-coordination-countering>

Security expert: expect ISIS attacks using children during Ramadan and into summer

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/security-expert-expect-isis-attacks-using-children-during-ramadan-and-into-summer-1.1214243>

Uzbekistan repatriates 93 women, children from Syrian camp

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/uzbekistan-repatriates-93-women-children-syrian-camp-2021-04-30/>

Afghanistan to Discuss Fate of Foreign IS Prisoners with Their Countries

<https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/afghanistan-discuss-fate-foreign-prisoners-their-countries>

‘ISIS not just regional terror outfit but global syndicate’

<https://newstodaynet.com/index.php/2021/05/12/isis-not-just-regional-terror-outfit-but-global-syndicate/>

UN: ISIS used chemical and biological weapons against Iraqis

<https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/iraq/un-isis-used-chemical-and-biological-weapons-against-iraqis-1.1218090>

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD

Terrorists target religious groups in Afghanistan

ANI: 13 May 2021

The 2020 International Religious Freedom Report released by the United States revealed that terrorist groups in Afghanistan continued to target religious and ethnoreligious groups.

<https://www.bignewsnetwork.com/news/269442092/terrorists-target-religious-groups-in-afghanistan>

Al-Shabaab distributes Eid al-Fitr gifts in town it seized from Somali army

Garowe Online: 11 May 2021

Al-Shabaab terrorists are trying to win favor by distributing gifts in a town they seized from the Somali Army.

<https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/al-shabaab-distributes-eid-al-fitr-gifts-in-town-it-seized-from-somali-army>

For more on this theme:

Attorney general calls for more funding to combat domestic terrorism

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/attorney-general-calls-increased-funding-combat-domestic-terrorism-n1266315>

Report to Congress on State Sponsored Terrorism

<https://news.usni.org/2021/05/04/report-to-congress-on-state-sponsored-terrorism>

Al Qaeda promises ‘war on all fronts’ against America as Biden pulls out of Afghanistan

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/30/asia/al-qaeda-afghanistan-biden-intl-cmd/index.html>

Don’t expect an al-Qaida reboot in Afghanistan

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/05/04/dont-expect-an-al-qaida-reboot-in-afghanistan/>

Why insurgent groups in northern Nigeria continue to kidnap school children

<https://theconversation.com/why-insurgent-groups-in-northern-nigeria-continue-to-kidnap-school-children-159965>

US Hails Afghan Eid Cease-fire, Suspects Islamic State Executed School Bombing

<https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/us-hails-afghan-eid-cease-fire-suspects-islamic-state-executed-school-bombing>

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan: Is China in its Crosshairs?

<https://jamestown.org/program/tehreek-e-taliban-pakistan-is-china-in-its-crosshairs/>

Hefazat-e-Islam Sub-Group ‘Manhazi’ Members Trained In Afghanistan: Bangladesh Police

<https://swarajyamag.com/news-brief/hefazat-e-islam-sub-group-manhazi-members-trained-in-afghanistan-bangladesh-police>

IRREGULAR WARFARE: DISINFORMATION AND MALIGN INFLUENCE

How the US Can Protect the Sovereignty of the Smallest Pacific Islands

Alexander B. Gray – *The Diplomat*: 7 May 2021

As the United States government confronts China's growing assertiveness, the challenges confronting the smallest Pacific island nations should be front of mind.

<https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/how-the-us-can-protect-the-sovereignty-of-the-smallest-pacific-islands/>

For more on this theme:

Russian Attempts to Expand Sputnik Vaccine Set Off Discord in Europe

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/02/world/europe/russia-slovakia-europe-coronavirus-sputnik-vaccine.html>

Chinese propaganda outlet makes fresh attack on Australia

<https://www.9news.com.au/national/chinese-state-media-in-new-attack-on-australian-troops-in-afghanistan/b7876f84-6469-4f13-87a5-12e567838e37>

China and Russia's Dangerous Convergence

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-05-03/china-and-russias-dangerous-convergence>

Why African countries back China on human rights

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-56717986>

Beijing's Woke Propaganda War in America

<https://www.hoover.org/research/beijings-woke-propaganda-war-america>

IRREGULAR WARFARE: CYBER

Army of fake fans boosts China's messaging on Twitter

Erika Kinetz – *The Associated Press*: 12 May 2021

The Chinese Communist Party has opened a new front in its long, ambitious war to shape global public opinion: Western social media.

<https://apnews.com/article/asia-pacific-china-europe-middle-east-government-and-politics-62b13895aa6665ae4d887dcc8d196dfc>

For more on this theme:

Cyber Command shifts counterterrorism task force to focus on higher-priority threats

<https://www.militarytimes.com/cyber/2021/05/04/cyber-command-shifts-counterterrorism-task-force-to-focus-on-higher-priority-threats/>

Kim Jong-un's school for hackers: Recruited as young children, hotheaded in training camps and unleashed to wage digital war. TOM LEONARD details how North Korea's elite cyber-attackers are wreaking havoc across the world... and even crippling the NHS

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9572639/TOM-LEONARD-North-Koreas-elite-cyber-attackers-wreaking-havoc-world.html>